

Elizabeth Getts
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Higher Education Committee Testimony

SB19 “An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses”

I am here today to testify my support of the importance of Senate Bill 19, “An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses.” College administrations have been known to turn a blind eye to allegations of sexual assault on campus, and that needs to change. It is of utmost importance to students everywhere to feel safe on campus and confident in their institution’s policies surrounding relationship abuse and/or sexual violence. This bill provides guidelines for universities on how to address these allegations, specifically by ensuring that the parties involved are not forced to be in the same dorm, classes, or taking the same transportation to and from campus. This bill also states that outside restraining orders be honored on campus as they are honored in the community. Most importantly, this bill states that a clear standard of consent must be followed by all students when engaging in sexual activity. To some, this may seem extreme. Some will argue that this isn’t a reality, as students have “drunken sex” all the time and no one ever complains. Others will argue that a woman who is giving signals all night, but changes her mind at the last minute, is not being “fair” to the man she’d supposedly been pursuing earlier that evening. I’m here to tell you that we need to draw a line somewhere. Whether or not the aforementioned scenarios are common, or fair, or truthful, the only solution now is to eliminate the gray area surrounding sexual assault and make it as clear as possible. “No means no” is no longer a sufficient line to draw given the current sexual climate, especially on campus.

The second part of this bill which I find particularly important to me is the specification of intimate partner violence. My generation remains affected by the stereotype that sexual violence cannot, or doesn’t occur between a boyfriend and a girlfriend. On campus, we are pressured by our peers, unbeknownst to them, to stay in relationships that are not healthy for us because we “make such a cute couple” and are “so great together”. We cannot change this in society. We can change, however, the way that our universities make us aware of the signs of intimate partner violence, and the resources we can use to escape it. As a young woman of only 23 years, I have experience in what this bill is trying to prevent. I have been the girl ignored by campus counselors, police officers, and friends, and as a result, I implore you to pass SB19, to ensure we create a brighter and healthier future for campus communities in this state. Thank you for your time.